

EXHIBIT A

Declaration of Suzanne French, Former Solar Titan HR Manager

DECLARATION OF SUZANNE FRENCH

I, Suzanne French, hereby state that I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth below and the facts contained herein are true to the best of my recollection, except for those facts which are alleged to be upon information and belief, and as to those allegations, I hereby certify I believe the same to be true. If called as a witness, I would competently testify as follows:

1. I am a United States citizen and am over 18 years of age. I reside in Knoxville, Tennessee.
2. I am the former Human Resources Manager for Ideal Horizon Benefits, LLC d/b/a Solar Titan USA ("Solar Titan").
3. I have over 25 years of experience in human resources, business management, and payroll.
4. I worked in accounting for the JTPA Program (Knox County/CAC), Human Resources (Knox County Schools-Payroll and HR - including developing job descriptions for all Knox County School employees and implementing FMLA), and 20 years with Boyd Sports as their Business Manager overseeing Payroll, Human Resources, Workers' Compensation, and Financials for Tennessee Smokies Baseball as well as baseball teams in Greeneville, Johnson City, and Elizabethton.
5. I had previously served on the Tennessee Statewide Board for the American Payroll Association for three years and I am a current board member for the East TN Payroll Association and had the payroll and human resources knowledge to bring Solar Titan into compliance.
6. I worked for Solar Titan from November 2021 until December 2022.
7. During my employment with Solar Titan, I became concerned about numerous aspects of the business's operations.

8. For example, Stacey Monks was overseeing HR and payroll and I noticed immediately that employees had been hired without the filling out or providing the proper paperwork. I found several terminated employees that had not been terminated in the insurance plan the first week. By February, I was able to take complete control of the files and the HR process.
9. I also found payroll issues. For example: letting employees work 8 straight hours before taking breaks (federal laws only allow 6 hours per fact sheet given to Jessica Rial), employees complaining that they had not been paid, improper payroll deductions, employees not given insurance information at start of employment, and employees not able to reach payroll to ask questions. Stacey Monks also hired mechanics and put them on salary even though they were not qualified to be in an exempt position. I informed Ms. Monks that this was an improper pay rate. She did move them to hourly after a few months (I had given her the exempt employee policy regarding salary verses hourly.)
10. Stacey Monks directed me to not be involved in payroll, even though I knew we were not in compliance and Stacey stated that Jessica Rial was doing a good job. I found that Jessica Rial did not have the basic payroll knowledge needed to be compliant in managing a payroll department, nor did Stacey Monks have the knowledge to oversee the department. Both were not aware of basic Federal Labor Laws and refused to accept any advice given. Sarah Kirkland and Craig Kelley agreed with Stacey Monks' decision that Jessica Rial (Payroll Manager) was competent.
11. Brandon Stephens was hired in February as our Controller (CFO) and started working on getting the company in compliance in all areas including payroll, which resulted in Jessica Rial being moved out of payroll. Stacey Monks and Sarah Kirkland then made Jessica Rial Operations Manager. It was quickly noted by other staff that she was not able to manage

the operations and complaints began to come to me from the installation crews. A crew member filed a formal complaint against Jessica Rial for sexual harassment, and Sarah Kirkland took over the investigation from me. Sarah Kirkland deemed the complaint unsubstantiated. The employee who complained resigned shortly after. Other crew members had complaints against Jessica Rial, but they did not want to file formal complaints and lose their jobs due to Sarah Kirkland “protecting” Jessica Rial.

12. Solar Titan would hire people to install the solar systems it sold who had no relevant experience or employment history at an extremely low apprentice pay, promising good pay after training.
13. Solar Titan also did not adequately train its employees in either proper installation procedure or safety. Between hiring inexperienced and unqualified employees, and failing to provide proper training, many Solar Titan installations were simply done incorrectly and, in some cases, dangerously. Stacey Monks complained to me that getting the crew to wear their safety harnesses was difficult and she was going to “get rid of them if they didn’t start wearing them”. I had suggested that we needed to have OSHA safety training as we had already had accidents relating to not using safety harnesses while on roofs, flash arc eye injuries, and cuts while using equipment.
14. Solar Titan also did not provide its installation staff with the proper equipment to complete installation jobs. Again, this often resulted in incorrect or incomplete installations.
15. Solar Titan would also install solar systems without pulling the requisite permits, which I found by a customer calling and I looked for the information in Sales Force (software for tracking customers/jobs).

16. Solar Titan also performed installations without oversight from a licensed electrician.

When we hired licensed electricians, I was unable to get complete paperwork.

17. I tried on several occasions to set up OSHA training (with Dwayne Strickland) but was told by Stacey Monks that she was working on it. I do think that Stacey Monks started doing some safety training with Solar Titan employees, but I was not informed of what was being taught nor were there any certificates of completion to go into the employee files.

18. I was told to set up the DOT certification files and make sure that everyone completed the process. This was difficult due to Stacey Monks and Jessica Rial changing appointments after I had set them up. When I resigned, the files were still incomplete because I was not able to get employees scheduled without knowing their availability.

19. On numerous occasions, I raised my concerns about the lack of training and lack of proper equipment (as the crew expressed concerns to me) to Sarah Kirkland and Stacy Monks.

20. My concerns went unaddressed and were often immediately dismissed. I was told by Sarah Kirkland and Stacey Monks that they were taking care of everything and that I needed to just focus on HR. I also took my concerns to Craig Kelley and he was also dismissive and told me to bring my concerns to Sarah Kirkland.

21. I also raised concerns about Solar Titan's dismal customer service track record. I attempted to change the way we focused on our customers (based on our customer service employee complaints to me as HR). Again, these concerns were ignored, and I was told not to try and make changes as this was Jessica Rial's department (per Sarah Kirkland).

22. Before I arrived at Solar Titan, Solar Titan regularly failed to get the required identity verification information from newly hired employees before sending them out to work.

23. For example, I-9 employee verification forms were often incomplete and, in some cases, not provided at all. Jessica Rial was responsible for completing the I-9 process before I started, and when I gained access to the files I found that several were incomplete and they were not filling out the employer portion and storing the I-9's in a notebook.

24. I was also asked to perform task that I was uncomfortable with or that I knew to be illegal or unethical. For example:

- a. When we were going through an audit for a possible investor, I was instructed by Sarah Kirkland to complete the employer portion of all the I-9's that were done before I started employment and sign them. I refused and stated that Jessica Rial would need to sign the I-9's that were done during her tenure. I was told that she didn't have time to do that and that it was my job.
- b. When I explained to Sarah Kirkland and Stacey Monks that it was a Federal Law that employees must take a break if they work more than 6 hours (after sending the Federal poster regarding breaks to the payroll dept and it was ignored), I was told that Jessica Rial knew what she was doing and to stop trying to help with payroll. The employees continued working past the 6 hours until Brandon Stephens took over payroll and corrected it.
- c. When hiring licensed electricians, I requested to have them to come in and complete paperwork. Dale Roden would give them the paperwork and return the paperwork to me incomplete. I stated that he or Stacey Monks would need to complete the paperwork. I was told not to worry about it – we were just paying them to be our “Qualified Agents.” Solar Titan only used electricians to pull permits, not to actually provide oversight.

- d. Insurance was not paid (due 12/1/22) due to not having funds, resulting in cancellation of health insurance as of November 1, 2022. Employees lost health benefits with no notice, resulting in hardship for many employees.
 - e. Payrolls also were changed and/or late due to funding issues. For example: employees were notified a few days before an expected pay date that the company was moving to bi-weekly payroll and giving them no time to adjust, the payroll date of December 2, 2022 was not funded until December 5, 2022, and the December 30, 2022 was not funded until January 4, 2023. All of the above situations created a hardship for employees.
 - f. On December 28, 2022 I was told that all employees had been sent home due to no funds to pay payroll, including myself and that we hoped to return January 2, 2023. I was unable to get any information as to what was happening (Sarah Kirkland was on vacation in Las Vegas and Craig Kelley was no longer involved with the company). I was unable to process a WARN notice or complete separation notices due to no communication from the owners.
25. I also became aware that Sarah Kirkland's child Jennifer Johnson was on Solar Titan's payroll; however, to my knowledge Jennifer Johnson lived out of state per their address on employee reports and was not present in the building to work. Matt Kirkland and Nathan Kirkland also were on employee reports from payroll dept. and hardly performed any work for the company while I was there.
26. After several instances of raising concerns and being rebuffed, I decided it was in my best interest to resign.

27. Shortly after leaving, I was asked by Sarah Kirkland via text message to return my work laptop so that it could be “wiped” and to return the I-9 notebooks. I believe that my work laptop could contain evidence of illegal or unethical activity (e.g., incomplete I-9 forms and issues with payroll). My email account was deleted which also had evidence of the concerns that were raised. I still have my work laptop and am willing to turn it over to the receiver.
28. During the end of my employment, I became aware that Solar Titan was intending to disband as a company and start an entirely new business endeavor with Texas Solar per conversations with Brandon Stephens, CFO. Brandon and I had discussions on the way the company was being mismanaged and were hoping to move to a new era with a new owner.
29. I was concerned that Solar Titan did not intend to remedy the numerous consumer complaints stemming from the company’s misrepresentations to consumers and the issues with employee hiring and training.
30. I am concerned that if the management team consisting of Sarah Kirkland, Stacey Monks, and Jessica Rial go to work for Texas Solar, they will continue to operate in the same manner as they did with Solar Titan and will be detrimental to the consumers.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Tennessee and pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746 that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed this, the 13th day of February, 2023, in Knoxville, Tennessee (city/state).


Suzanne French